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AN EMPEROR'S MADNESS OR  
NATIONAL ABERRATION ?



# An Emperor's Madness or National Aberration?

By

ERNESTO LUGARO

Professor Extraordinary of Neuropathy and  
Psychiatry in the University  
of Modena

Translated by W. N. ROBINSON, M.D

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## AN EMPEROR'S MADNESS OR NATIONAL ABERRATION ?

THE things which I am about to say have been said, perhaps all of them, times innumerable for months past ; however, I should not feel satisfied if I did not say them over again in this review.<sup>1</sup> The war is the great reality of the moment, the constant thought of every one, the source of the only problems which can to-day interest anyone who does not live in the clouds.

The reasons for the war have been discussed from every point of view in the journals, in reviews, in books, in lectures and in political speeches ; they have had light thrown on them from all sides, from every doctrinal standpoint, helped by the practical experience of publicists,

<sup>1</sup> *Rivista di patologia nervosa e mentale* Roma, Agosto, 1915.

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literary men, economists, historians, statisticians and soldiers, and with a marvellous agreement in results and opinions. The subject has also occupied the attention of the alienists, indeed they have almost come to blows over it, and they bring into the chorus a voice somewhat discordant, which is fortunately overpowered though far from being unnoticeable. There is no reason for this discordance, which is now disappearing. All think and know now that this war is not an accidental and unexpected catastrophe, but is the result of a thousand historical forces ; it is not the effect of individual caprice, but emanates from the will of a nation, from a will somewhat obscure in the mass but very apparent in the ruling classes. The war was prepared for with the long, patient, dogged labour of several generations ; it was foreseen, even preannounced by isolated voices which to-day appear miraculously prophetic. Civilized Europe

suspected but did not believe; it neglected the probable but not certain danger, sunk in a dream of optimism, confiding in the restraining force of civilization. One people only was awake, armed, awaiting the propitious hour. Even popular intuition has this time hit the mark, but since it loves simplifying symbols, it has concentrated all responsibility on a few, or on one only. To-day the imprecations all rain on the heads of the two allied Emperors, specially on that of William II who, of the two, puts himself much more in evidence and is more noisy. Some alienists have wished to give a scientific dress to this propensity, maintaining, in agreement with a widespread popular opinion, that in the two Emperors there is something abnormal, almost insane, and that to their perverse influence the war policy is chiefly due. I do not pretend to deny the influence of dominant personalities on the course of

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historical events. It is intuitively evident, and no contrary teaching can deprive of interest the thoughts and deeds of men eminent for intellect, power of will, or social position. Individual psychology cannot now be neglected when one seeks the key to historical events, its influence too often makes a breach in the theory of historic materialism; especially in the case of an exceptional psychology whether as regards ability, perversion, wickedness, crime or madness. I would not therefore deny to psychologists and alienists the right to enquire, under the guidance of reliable documents, up to what point may be traced the merit of beneficial social movements; or how far the responsibility for some devastating crisis may be due to the exceptional influence of some great protagonist of history.

But I must immediately add, that very rarely do alienists make a correct use of this their incontestable right. The taste

for theorizing, the love of paradox, professional habit, impel them to maintain opinions at least excessive. This marginal zone of psychiatry is also frequented by not a few extemporized dilettanti who are ignorant of the value of clinical signs and fall into the old traps of overworked anthropology, whilst they might, at least with greater profit, keep to instinctive psychology which is within the range of any intelligent person, and which furnishes the most conclusive data. Now, coming to the particular subject, I do not hesitate to say that if the clinical observations regarding the two Emperors (making allowance for exaggeration, for some gross errors and inevitable defects in verification) contain a nucleus of truth, the subordinate proposition which assigns to the present crisis an origin psychopathological and personal in the infirmities of the two Emperors, is a huge blunder, and leads to a practical error of some im-



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portance, because it gives support to the dangerous illusion that an opportune death or a new St. Helena might suffice to resolve a crisis which is not individual but national.

# THE TWO EMPERORS



## THE TWO EMPERORS

A STUDY of both Emperors has been made by Dr. Neipp, Swiss alienist, and appeared in the *Revue de Psychothérapie* of Lausanne.

To William II have been dedicated special articles by W. Bechterew in the *Birgevia Wiedomosti*, by Jean Finot in the *Revue des Revues*; and a volume (*Folie d'Empereur*: A. Michel, Paris) has been written about him by Dr. Cabanès, a noted collector of historical curiosities. Dr. Neipp gives a dissertation on the characters of the physical degeneration in Francis Joseph, some of which are a legacy from the family of Hapsburg. From the psychological side he puts in relief the intellectual mediocrity and moral insensibility; and finishes by prognosticating,

without great risk, an imminent "Senile imbecility."

Various and more complex, are the diagnoses which refer to William II. Dr. Neipp puts forward several hypotheses; he puts in the first line that of a "Maniaco-depressive" psychosis; he does not overlook the possibility of hereditary syphilis; and does not exclude even incipient progressive paralysis! Jean Finot contents himself with a generic diagnosis of "degeneration" physical and mental.

Bechterew describes William as a "degenerate of Neronian type." Cabanès goes off from the main subject to study the ancestors of William, "a dynasty of degenerates," and as to William himself, he insists on data which might authorize the diagnosis of "Epilepsy."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Given the rigor of the censure, which prohibits in Germany and Austria every freedom of discussion, it is very natural that these psychiatric diagnoses have

What is the truth in all this? What clinical value have the particular arguments, used to support these conclusions?

not found there up to the present adequate criticism!

It is somewhat significant, though not surprising, that some German alienists should have received them almost as an outrage or blasphemy.

The diagnoses of Bechterew specially aroused indignation. Professor Reichardt of Würzburg hastened to inform the *Neurol. Centralblatt*. And the editor of this periodical, announcing in his turn the scandalous fact in No. 9 of the 1st of May last, feels obliged to comment on it thus:—

“Wir konnten uns ein ausführlicheres Referat der *Petrograder Zeitung* vom II (24) xii. 1914 verschaffen, aus dem tatsächlich hervorgeht, das W. Bechterew in den *Birsh. Wiedomosti* einen solchen Artikel geschrieben hat, in dem er es nicht verschmäht unseren Kaiser als eine Persönlichkeit an der Grenze von Gesundheit und Geisteskrankheit hinzustellen. W. Bechterew verdankt den grössten Teil seiner Entwicklung deutscher Wissenschaft, und es genügt daher wohl, dieses Elaborat in solcher Zeit den deutschen Nervenärzten zur Kenntnis zu bringen, um sein Verhalten ausreichend zu brandmarken.” Strange way of thinking! Why should not Bechterew express his sincere opinion? He owes much—as all do—to international science and necessarily to Germany; but what of that? His debt to it Bechterew has magnificently repaid, and one may truly say that

The house of Hapsburg certainly offers rich material to those who take pleasure in the study of race degeneration, and

German science owes much to Bechterew. But in any case, what does it matter? Were he even indebted to it, does it follow that he must, out of gratitude, abstain from every form of criticism? And then what has William II to do with German science? What would the editor of the *Neurol. Centralblatt* say if it were intimated to the Germans that they must not speak ill of—say—Nero, solely because they owe a great deal to Latin civilization? Or perhaps Bechterew ought to renounce his opinion so as not to offend the sentiments of sacred respect which the editors of the *Neurol. Centralblatt* bear towards the Emperor? It is a ridiculous pretext. There is nothing to stigmatize in the conduct of Bechterew. If anyone, those Germans might be stigmatized who, born, brought up and educated in Germany, feel themselves devoid of all right of criticism as regards their Emperor: *treue Diener* if you will, but as citizens inept and without dignity. I have referred to this insignificant journalistic episode because it gives one a perfect insight into a mode of thought and feeling which might be said to be truly singular if it were not unfortunately very widespread in Germany. It may be remembered that when B. von Gudden died, killed by Ludwig II of Bavaria, the notoriously mad king, the *Neurol. Centralblatt* gave of this death, which concerned particu-

Dr. Neipp adopts the explanation of heredity, evident even in certain anatomical particulars, for example in the pro-

larly German psychiatry, a notice almost clandestine.

It is really worth while to read in n. 15 of 1886, p. 311, under the heading "Personalien" before the notices of transfer or promotion of certain lunatic asylum doctors, the poor obituary notice which begins thus:—"Am 13 Juni endete ein gewaltsamer Tod das Leben von Bernhard v. Gudden geb. den 7 Juni 1824 in Cleve. Es soll an dieser Stelle nicht auf das tragische Ereignis, dem Gudden zum Opfer fiel, eingegangen werden. Es soll hier nur der tiefen Trauer um der schweren Verlust, den die Wissenschaft durch sein Tod erlitten." After these obscure words comes an extremely summary and colourless reference to his scientific work. Fortunately at the end is added, "Für seine Pflicht, in der Erfüllung seines Berufes ging er in den Tod"—for otherwise an ignorant reader might think that Gudden had lost his life in some discreditable and unspeakable adventure.

Of the homicide there is not a word. And it cannot be said that the paranoic King of Bavaria was a negligible personality from the psychiatric point of view. The case of Ludwig of Bavaria was in fact commented on in a very different manner by other alienists in a position of greater freedom.

Tanzi and Riva, for example, thus concluded their study on "Paranoia" written at the time (*Rivista Spirituale di Freniatria*, vol. xii. no. 1-2 1886):



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geneism already studied carefully by Galippe. But it is unnecessary to say how inconclusive these researches are when

“The suicide of a degenerate King, the killing of an illustrious anatomist, the twenty years' bad government of a too long-suffering people, and the unseemly spectacle of a paranoic on the throne were the sad consequences of a diagnosis too long deferred and a condition too long unsuspected. Nothing, however, could have been simpler and easier than to recognize a paranoic by origin in that misanthropic prince, who showed himself vain, ambitious, mystic, romantic, voluble, subject to hallucinations, eccentric in his acts, habits, opinions and conduct, perverted in his æsthetic tastes, perverted in love, and in the ethical sense, exaggerated and unbalanced in everything; and so profoundly stamped with his medieval ancestry that political journalism with a literary intention, but with unconscious scientific accuracy, described him as a Parsifal redivivus. In these conditions, grave for any citizen, but more than ever incompatible with the position of a Sovereign, it was obviously to be foreseen that, sooner or later, delirium would occur. With less obsequiousness to the person of the King, but with greater respect to the abstract dignity of the Crown, which cannot acquire any prestige on the head of a madman, Ludwig of Wittelsbach would have been deposed years before, and many misfortunes would have been thus spared to him and to his people.”

one wishes to draw diagnostic conclusions from them *ad personam*. Passing to subjects more strictly pathological, Dr. Neipp discourses on the thickness of the skull, on the meninges and the brain of Francis Joseph as if he had already made an autopsy on him, and constructs a diagnostic forecast on what he has not seen.

If really, as rumour has it, the Emperor is in full mental decadence, a thing not at all improbable considering his advanced age and the tacit abdication made for some years in favour of the Archduke Ferdinand, that only permits us to arrive at negative conclusions about the personal influence of Francis Joseph. His dementia has not changed greatly the direction of the internal and foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a clear sign that this policy is not his personal work. The recrudescence of anti-Italian manifestations during these last years, and the trialistic designs of the Archduke Ferdi-

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nand do not differ, as might appear, from the traditional policy. It is hardly necessary to say that Austria has been always, even under the mask of the alliance, a cordial enemy of Italy. As to the trialism Austro-Hungarian-Slav, it is not opposed to Austro-Hungarian dualism; it is an expedient of the same kind, more adapted to the changed times and to the growing vigour of the jugo-Slav nations, an expedient which is not hurtful to Austrian supremacy, at bottom Germanic; but above all it is a step to reach, not indeed a stable equilibrium between the present nationalities of the Empire, but a dynamic equilibrium of the greatest military and political power for the development of an ultra-European design, which makes part of the Germanic dream.

And therefore the pistol shots at Serajevo which killed the grim-faced Archduke, wounded in the most vital

part the ambitions of imperialist Germany. In any case, the supposed dementia of Francis Joseph is of recent origin, acquired, coming unexpectedly, and to which one cannot attribute retro-active influence, nor can the importance of the final issue attach to a morbid process of old date.

Better ascertained and more important are the constitutional psychological characteristics which are represented in the intellectual mediocrity and moral insensibility. Not even the most zealous courtiers have ever been able to attribute to this man—in sixty-seven years of reign—a single generous act, a single happy phrase, or flash of insight. And even if one does not wish to put faith in rumours coming from Court circles, which accuse him of implacable family-hatreds, nor in the voice of the people which attributes to him the cruelties of his government, it is evident that this man has remained always impassive in the midst of mourning

and ruin, without a word of regret, immovable as a rock in the midst of the tragedies which wrecked his family. This, however, is all in the region of anomalies of character, and does not enter that of true mental disease. Placed in an ordinary condition of life Francis Joseph might perhaps have remained altogether obscure and tolerated among the crowd of normal people, where not even moral insensibility confers an exceptional position if united with a certain amount of prudence.

Like so many others, he might have been clever enough to exercise, without attracting too much attention, those activities which prudently respect the penal code, while finding easy adjustments with the moral law.

As Emperor, the essentially negative character of his intelligence and his tastes has proved useful to him, harmonizing perfectly with his surroundings. Intelligence mechanical as that of a bureaucrat ;

will, rule-bound as that of a sub-official ; arid heart of a bigot, he has been able to personify splendidly the authority of an artificial state, of a government cynically intent on maintaining itself in an equilibrium of hatreds, rather than on creating a harmony of interests in view of a common ideal. In the inextricable medley of nations, of races, of tongues and of clashing interests which the Austro-Hungarian Empire has had to reduce to unity, only the predominance of the military, bureaucratic and ecclesiastical castes has been able to effect any sort of cohesion ; and the most obvious plan, while leading to inevitable ruin, was to exploit conflicting economic interests, rivalries for predominance, and race hatreds.

Never was there a policy more wicked and ignoble than this, and well it accorded with the mentality of one so unfeeling and so unmoral ; but it would be a mistake to consider it the expression of a

personal will, since it is the monstrous product of an age-old shuffling of irreconcilable interests.

To William II are attributed various imperfections and physical infirmities, some of which, properly authenticated, might have considerable importance from a psychiatric point of view. Let us—for pity's sake—put aside the excogitations of J. Finot on “Wundermuth's Ear,” and on the auriculo-temporal angle. Let us also set aside the fœtid perspiration of the feet, perhaps hereditary, recorded by Neipp.

The chronic otorrhœa from which William has suffered since infancy might be a cause of epilepsy, but not as Cabanès would have it by extension of inflammation to the meninges, which would have resulted in a fatal meningitis, but by way of reflex action. If William is truly epileptic, this epilepsy may in any case be more probably connected with other

processes. Of peculiar significance for diagnostic purposes might be the atrophy of the left arm if one really knew the nature of it; but concerning this atrophy there has been only doubtful information which allows of different conjectures, without leading to any certain conclusion. According to some the atrophy was noticed at birth; according to others, not until two or three days afterwards. The most widely-spread opinion (which would take away almost all psychiatric value from the infirmity) is that it exists as a direct consequence of obstetric injury.

An inopportune or unskilful intervention may have occasioned an obstetrical paralysis (Bar), or a dislocation of the shoulder (Boisleux), or a fracture of the humerus (Treub). In confirmation of this origin it is added that Dr. Martin, Court obstetrician, fell into disgrace, and that his son has also felt the consequences of the imperial resentment, meeting with



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insurmountable obstacles in his university career. Other hypotheses are also made which, to tell the truth, appear to have little probability. Courtade put forward "Anterior poliomyelitis," quite irreconcilable with a natal or perhaps prenatal origin of the affection. Witkowski suggests "Ectromelia" through degeneration from hereditary syphilis; but this hypothesis agrees badly with the very marked want of mobility in the limb, which though scarcely four inches shorter than the other is almost altogether unserviceable; the fingers can be flexed, but the arm cannot be bent or raised. Too little attention has been paid to the possibility of a cortical paralysis, which would acquire still greater probability if there were confirmation of Cabanès' assertion that also the leg of the left side and even all the left half of the body show signs of atrophy. In favour of "infantile cerebral paralysis" there are the

difficult, parturition, and the state of asphyxia in which the child came into the world, so that it was believed at first to be dead. Hereditary syphilis may be excluded; when his father contracted syphilis, William was already ten years old; the hypothesis, however, of a cerebropathia would accord well with the epilepsy admitted by numerous witnesses among the intimates of the Kaiser. Of these epileptic attacks there has been no definite account, but it appears certain that on several occasions the Kaiser, either in consequence of strong emotion, or without any apparent reason, has had some kind of seizure, such as to make him fall senseless. In any case, if these infirmities, duly authenticated, permit of more definite inferences as to pathogenesis and the nature of the mental state of William II, they are not enough to prove a psychopathia, the evidence of which must be supplied by direct psychological testi-

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mony. That William II is unbalanced, a degenerate, and even actually mad, in the strict sense of the word, has for some time been a widely-spread opinion. Even in Germany if very few dare to say so, many think it ; and the rigor of the censorship, and the dread of a process for *lèse-majesté* have not prevented this opinion showing itself here and there under the form of satirical allusions. For instance, in 1904, in the review *Die Gesellschaft* appeared an article on Caligula by L. Quidde, an historical study, interwoven from top to bottom with transparent allusions. I remember, even that fifteen years ago there appeared among the announcements in a Berlin daily, the promise of a generous reward to anyone who should trace out a certain William Kaiser, a very dangerous lunatic escaped from an asylum ; a full personal description was given, and it was added that the fugitive among other delusions had that of

believing himself Emperor of Germany and master of the world. The announcement appeared several times before the authorities perceived the sacrilegious satire.

Everybody knows how much William loves to make himself talked about, and how his impulsive and multiform activities have furnished to the press a thousand bizarre anecdotes, which when recounted even by the most friendly critics, always end with a point of irony. By these minute facts of his daily life, the psychological characteristics of the Kaiser are thrown into the highest relief. It would matter little if the restlessness of William were to find an outlet in continual journeyings; in the harmless mania for changing his uniform so many times a day, on account of which he has been compared to the quick-change artist Fregoli; in efforts to appear talented and encyclopædic, playing the part in turn of strategist, scientist, patron of the arts,

sailor, ceramist, cattle breeder, painter, agriculturist, musician, sportsman, man of business, evangelical pastor, and so on ; or in making in moments of good humour, bad jokes in the worst possible taste to courtiers and officers. Graver in consequences and more expressive as a mental sign is his mania for talking.

William has never let slip an opportunity of solemnly delivering his opinion, and has even immortalized his magniloquence in various volumes.

Looked at closely his ideas have not the least originality. His mystic, threatening and prophetic tirades, although they appear to us so abnormal as to suggest paranoic delirium, correspond with the habit of thought of the most influential classes in Germany. Of his own, with the exception of the florid and emphatic style, William has contributed nothing but the inopportuneness. If certain speeches have been deplored ; if they

have occasioned such conflicts with the other powers of the State as to necessitate humiliating disavowals from the Emperor, it has been always because they were *mal à propos* rather than from their matter. The bellicose boastings might arouse alarm ; it were better that William should act the pacifist, the candidate for the Nobel prize, while armaments and espionage were pushed forward feverishly. The Germans, we know, like to work under water. We see clearly to-day how superficial, empty, addressed to the gallery were the protests in Germany against certain speeches of William which offended the most elementary sentiments of humanity, and even of military honour. The protests against the speech to the recruits which inculcated obedience even to the order to fire on their own relatives, were soon forgotten.

And the indignation of the Socialists after the imperial discourse which ex-

horted the soldiers starting for China neither to give quarter nor to take prisoners did not prevent them from taking part *con amore* in the massacres of the unarmed in Belgium, France and Poland. More important are the intimate defects of the Kaiser in regard to his moral character.

Unbounded vanity, levity, instability of purpose, violent obstinacy, and a vindictive and petulant temper are the endowments, neither rare nor precious, which are unanimously attributed to him by relatives, courtiers and by public report. These are—one may say—the generic qualities of the man; others are attributed to him, more definite, which deserve attentive examination because dangerous conjoined with the powers of an Emperor; duplicity, cruelty, megalomaniac mysticism. They are precisely those to which is chiefly owing the opinion that William II, excited by hare-

brained ideas and designs, has drawn his people into a war which is spreading mourning and ruin without parallel and which gravely threatens civilization. It is well to repeat it : this opinion is too superficial.

The present war would not have happened if these defects had not been thoroughly in accord with the most intimate sentiments of the German mind.

Not unjustly do very many Germans consider their Kaiser the manifest and most genuine exponent of national thought and sentiment.

That is nothing to be proud of—but it is so.





THE KAISER AND GERMAN  
POLICY



## THE KAISER AND GERMAN POLICY

WILLIAM has been accused of duplicity and of perfidy. The accusation cannot be said to be undeserved. He has often boasted of being the true advocate of peace, and has not neglected opportunities of advising his people to keep their powder dry and the sword sharp; while as to his motto, *oderint dum metuant*, one does not know whether it is meant more for foreigners or for his own subjects. To the Boers he sent a notorious telegram encouraging them to resistance, while he was proposing to Queen Victoria a plan of his for making war against the rebels. In October of 1910 he expressed personally to the King of the Belgians his desire that the good

relations between Belgium and Germany should always become closer, while he could not have been ignorant of the underhand preparations which were being made for the conquest of Belgium. And in 1911, when visiting King George, he brought in his suite to England, under false colours, the chief of the Service of Espionage.

The facts are indisputable, clear, expressive, but one would be wrong to see in them any indication of a personal direction actually impressed on the policy of the Empire. Usually his personality is not in evidence except in some imprudence ; all the rest is incorporated in the traditional policy of Germany, which goes much farther back. The Emperor is at bottom a docile, though occasionally maladroït instrument of the Government.

The policy of double dealing of Germany, from Frederick II to Bismarck and to Bethmann Hollweg, has always chosen for its motto some maxim which

exalts force and fraud, and disowns right and honour in international relations.

Not from August 1914,<sup>e</sup> but for two centuries has Germany maintained that treaties are only to be observed as long as convenient. Alliances were never viewed by the Germans from the standpoint of equality and reciprocity, but as a means of pacific enslavement, and political, military and commercial exploitation. As to the value of the triple alliance, very few have nourished any illusions in Italy. German disloyalty would in any case have made itself apparent, even to the blind, during the Italo-Turkish war and the two Balkan wars ;• and it would not have required a prophet to foretell the not far distant abandonment of it which was being prepared under the “brotherhood in arms” with Austria-Hungary, and with the new ally Turkey, destined from the first to pay with its own ruin for German insuccess. The hatred of Eng-

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and was born with the aspirations of Germany towards hegemony.

These aspirations became manifest after the victories of 1866 and 1870, but had been incubating in the minds of the Germans from the fall of Napoleon I. The territorial designs on Belgium and Holland are of old date, and are a corollary of the rivalry with England, and their claim to dominion of the sea. They disclosed themselves in 1848 at the National Diet of Frankfort, and their grave significance appeared, even then, so clearly that Camille Cavour was able to read it with ready intuition and to prophesy with certainty the future antagonism between Germany and England.

Germany was born militarist, with its Kings from the barracks, and such it remains. Everything in Germany has grown up under the shadow of the barracks, and everything has assumed an indelible military physiognomy; the school and

the church, the factory and the university. The Germanic conception of the State is irreconcilable with that of the other peoples of Western Europe, and therefore in their relations with Germany there is perennial misunderstanding. All this transcends by a long way the personal influence of a mediocre Emperor, however energetic and versatile. It transcends even the much stronger influence of party, and the autonomy, now extinguished, of the provinces. It is useless to-day to dilate on the predominance of the Junker, or to linger over a romantic comparison between Prussia and Bavaria, or to picture to oneself a Germany pensive and sentimental, impelled to violence by a mistaken sense of dutiful obedience. The solidarity of the German people in the war of to-day, wonderful and admirable as it is, apart from the odiousness and brutality of its avowed aim, is the index of a perfect concordance of sentiment,



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interests and aspirations ; of a psychological unity without which the long, tenacious, unceasing preparation of fifty years would not have been possible.

Neither can the colonial imperialism be said to be a creation of William II, although it has grown during his reign. There are those who attribute to the initiation of William the increase of the navy, and compare the policy of the Emperor with that of Bismarck, who kept clear of colonial enterprises. This comparison is only apparent. There is no discontinuity of political programme, but an amplification which has kept pace with the growth of strength and ambition. The Germans say plainly : what Prussia is doing in Germany, Germany will do in the world. Certainly to-day all Germany is Prussia ; the rest remains to be seen. Meanwhile the expansion of the army was foreseen, encouraged and desired by the manufacturers. They, trusting al-

together to military strength, have rushed into a commercial and banking policy the end of which can only be victory or bankruptcy. All Germany is nationalist and militarist. Even the two social classes, which for different reasons ought to be drawn to internationalism, the working class and the intellectuals have affirmed themselves to be militarist, and to-day they do not deny it. In their famous appeals to the civilized nations, the German intellectuals asserted with stupefying assurance, that without German militarism, German culture would have been destroyed long ago, and Germany itself would have run the gravest danger ! On their side, the German Socialists have never understood internationalism honestly, that is on a basis of liberty and equality.

Marx and Engels were pangermanists ; they supported openly the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein and in regard to Trieste

and the Trentino they adopted the Germanic point of view. Also in the more recent period of the monster growth of armaments, German Socialism did not offer any serious opposition, even verbal; and what is worse, various heads of parties exalted the expansionist and colonial policy as worthy of all the support of the working classes.

Little economic victories, the raising of wages, and workmen's leagues have destroyed all impulse towards ideals in the German Socialists, who are content with well-fed slavery, like the dog who does not heed the chain which galls his neck. The war has found them ready for aggression, with the pretext of national defence: against whom? against Belgium? against Serbia? or against the fantastic and much-abused "Slav danger"?

• The internationalism of the German Socialists has been confided during the

war to emissaries sent to neutral countries under the auspices of the Imperial Government, to trouble the waters, and to foment an idiotic and anti-national pacifism. As the hour of the *redde rationem* approaches, the more this unseemly comedy is relied on to disarm foreign nations by plotting against their solidarity. It is hardly necessary to remind one that of these general tendencies of the German Government and people towards a policy of treachery and aggression, espionage is a prominent manifestation.

Now all have had their eyes opened through painful experience to this characteristic and artful invasion, much more systematic, penetrating and widely diffused than that which the Germans themselves are in the habit of attributing to the Jews and Japanese. Military espionage organized on a large scale was formerly the boast of Frederick II. Under Bismarck

it increased a hundredfold ; afterwards it increased still more, until it assumed the all-pervading form which recent events have revealed to the world. By the side of this has grown up, not less rankly, the economic espionage which organizes sabotage in rival industries and commerce ; civil espionage which penetrates into university schools ; and the systematic political and economic interposition, which flatters academic vanity, and spends rivulets of gold in buying over the condottieri of journalism. The activities of this form of espionage range from conspiracies with parliamentary adventurers to domestic intrigues, it treats with tenderness the Utopian quiet of humanitarian arcades, the crafty neutrality of the Church, the shortsighted but furious egotism of manufacturers and contrabandists ; it subsidizes strikes, and when opportunity offers, draws profit from shady tran-

sactions, from all kinds of prejudice, from every sort of baseness. It would be too optimistic to attribute an organization so large and insidious to a fanatical patriotism put at the service of the powers of the State. All this underhand work is in great part the spontaneous product of those same individual interests which impel Germany to political and military expansion. And there is evidently also a psychological predisposition to intrigue and hypocrisy, which, if not a characteristic of the race, is at least the fruit of education and national habit. It is very significant that espionage abroad finds its counterpart in a much more odious spy-system at home, which from the German schools mounts to the office, the army, the university, penetrates into families, breaks up friendships, desecrates even love. The spirit of the informer is abroad ; its malign influence overshadows the life of every German, the working

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man and the Chancellor of the Empire alike, paralyses the most circumspect with the incubus of obscure difficulties in life, and keeps a check on the more audacious with the threat of a process for *lèse-majesté*. Efficacious but hateful instrument of political domination, this espionage stifles individual thought, inclines the German youth to habits of suspicion, hypocrisy, and dissimulation, gives rise to an exaggerated deference for constituted authority and every official title, and incorporates and confines every individual in an automatic and asphyxiating hierarchy. The moral unity of Germany was never in doubt, even in time of peace. The war has confirmed it luridly, and in laying bare the national spirit of the Germans has revealed its ugliness, stupefying to many, unexpected even by the most pessimistic. It is well known that the psychology of the crowd is inexorably levelling, and suppresses all fineness of

sentiment and individual criticism ; but no one would have dreamt that the common level could have fallen so low. A year has not sufficed to accustom one to it, and one passes still from wonder to wonder, listening to what is said by the representative men of Germany, become more loquacious than usual as if wishing to assume their part of the responsibility for the policy which has led to the catastrophe of to-day. Statesmen shriek as unreasonably as the most ignorant, generals make proclamations in the style of a camp-follower, princes exalt fisticuffs and bites, poets sing hate and rage, the Chancellor confesses openly his rôle of secret disturber of the peace and abuses the enemy nations like a drunken prostitute, university professors endeavour to justify the war, the massacres and the vandalisms, repeating hypocritically miserable excuses which are enough to make a cat laugh, and extol their motives at the same time.



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Among them all, at present the most sensible is really the presumed madman, who becomes every day less rash in his prophetic blasphemies.

THE KAISER AND THE  
METHODS OF WÄR



## THE KAISER AND THE METHODS OF WAR

WILLIAM has been compared to Caligula and to Nero.\* Many people hold him responsible for the massacres and conflagrations which have dishonoured the new German war, and the alienists have been ready—too ready—to lay hold of this argument. It cannot be denied that some unquestioned facts are unfavourable to the accused. In his speeches William has exalted brute force, the naked sword which strikes terror into the enemy, the fight without quarter, the killing of the enemy who lays down his arms and the pitiless repression of civil revolts. There is also to be recorded that on August 14, 1914, irritated by the unexpected resistance of Belgium, which spoiled his plans

of premeditated aggression, he warned the King of the Belgians that the war would assume a "cruel character," and on the announcement followed the systematic atrocities which all the world knows.

If events were to be really interpreted in a manner so simple, William would have surpassed by a long way the Nero of history and of legend, since the German troops have trampled not only on every rule of war, every convention, but on every human sentiment. There are some things which should never be forgotten; the wholesale massacres of peaceful and unarmed populations, the killing of wounded and prisoners, of women and children, of old people, of monks and nuns, the sick and the insane; the destruction of entire cities already in military occupation, the bombardment of undefended towns and the burning of hospitals; the requisitions and war imposts made under threat of massacre; the systematic vio-

lation of women, the devastation, pillage and theft of private property, the use of poison gas and inflammatory liquids, poisoning of wells, sinking of unarmed ships without warning, the treacherous use of the white flag and wearing of enemy or red cross uniform as a disguise, the use of women and children as a shield when advancing against the enemy, the methodical destruction of factories, of works of art, and of historic monuments, the taking of hostages, often followed by shooting, and the atrocious mutilation of wounded, women and children. Not only has the Hague convention of 1907 been violated, point by point, and paragraph by paragraph, but also the rules sanctioned for their own army by the German General Staff in 1902, rules which interdict the use of poisons, assassination, proscriptions or ransoms ; the use of arms which occasion needless suffering, the killing of wounded and prisoners, and refusal of quarter.

Naturally the Germans have done their best to deny, attenuate and justify these enormities; but they have only succeeded in putting them in greater relief by the paltriness of their excuses. More than by the detestable talk of certain apologists of cruelty, is one disgusted by the clumsy hypocrisy with which the German intellectuals (first the eighty-seven elect, then the 125 of less repute), posing as the meek of the earth, have attempted a justification, adding to the crime an ungenerous and lying retort against the fallen. Remaining in their laboratories where the truth cannot reach them, but where the *mot d'ordre* of the military authorities arrives without fail, these men learned and hasten to teach to all the world, that the soldiers of the Kaiser acted in "legitimate defence," because "attacked" in a bloodthirsty way by the Belgians, "these treacherous assassins" who have nothing at all to

complain of in a just punishment. Never has been shown such a degree of rancour in the defence of a lost cause ! How can one justify the destruction of an entire country for some unrestrainable outburst of indignation on the part of single individuals. And how in any case could the Germans find fault with the civil population of Belgium for some act of self-defence when they themselves boast the institution of the Landsturm ? Coming into existence in April, 1813, the German Landsturm was a levy in mass of the countrymen ; without uniform, they armed themselves as best they could with scythes or pitchforks when guns were wanting, ready to oppose *invaders* with all the means at their disposal. It was an army for *the desperate defence of its own country*.

And to-day, when the Landsturm, armed at all points, has become an instrument of offence, of invasion and conquest, they dare to insult the Belgians,



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conquered but not subdued, who defend their homes from barbaric invasion, and for some individual cases of resistance, would justify the massacre of thousands of *unarmed*. The episode of Louvain is only one among a thousand, and the denials of the Germans, whether intellectuals or not, must yield under the avalanche of crushing proofs, of documents involuntarily furnished by the soldiers and officers themselves, with their personal notes and with orders written and printed. And was not the destruction of Paris, by a well-thought-out and detailed distribution of labour, settled beforehand in order to throttle France and compel it to disburse the milliards which were to serve for the expenses of the war? We have, however, wandered far from the presumed madness of William. It would be a true psychological absurdity if so many monstrous crimes were to be perpetrated out of simple obedience to the

superior orders of a criminal or a madman. The truth is quite otherwise. In reality William has only done his pre-assigned part in the German war organization, the rules of which, besides being now for more than a century methodically practised, have been reduced to a system.



THE THEORY OF ABSOLUTE  
WAR



## THE THEORY OF ABSOLUTE WAR

THE war of to-day has made widely known the ideas of German war theorists, among whom stand pre-eminent C. von Clausewitz and J. von Hartmann. .

Ideas truly interesting as showing the psychology of the German people, because they do not find any counterpart outside Germany.

Carl von Clausewitz, director of the War Academy of Berlin from 1810 to 1816, then head of the General Staff of Gneisenau, left when he died an unpublished work on the art of war, afterwards published in three volumes in 1832.

It is, one may say, a treatise on the metaphysics of war, a work of a type distinctly German. In it are taught the

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rules of "Absolute War," freed from every contingency of time and place, reduced to its pure laws. It is easy to understand that it is practically an exaltation of violence without limit and without scruple. Victory, the objective of the war, in an end which justifies everything.

The army in war must destroy the armed force of the enemy, cut off its supplies, and weaken it morally by terrorism. Every means, however atrocious, is good. Forced requisitions, only limited by the exhaustion of the country, are the rule during the occupation of enemy territory; in case of retreat, complete devastation is the rule. Humanity to the enemy is a "technical defect"; the war expert must not in the least consider whether the excesses of war are a benefit to humanity or not; this problem he must leave to the philosophers.

The theory was completed by Julius von Hartmann, who, as general of cavalry

in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, had had occasion to put it into practice.

He, however, deigns to take into consideration the conditions of time and place in which the war occurs, also the feelings of the troops. According to him, war with humanitarian restrictions is a misconception, an empty expression. Terrorism is a military principle of the first necessity. War does not suffer laws and cannot be hampered by international conventions. There are already enough restraints in the atavistic sentiments of humanity which the combatants have inherited as men. When an appeal is made to force, there are no longer any rights of the people, any violence whatever is lawful and humanitarian when of military utility. The German army, organ and living representative of collective German thought, makes the law, the only law.

These are the theories which have



influenced step by step the German General Staff in the compilation of the rules of war of 1902 (the famous *Kriegsgebrauch im Landkriege*) ; and its effective operation to-day is, it must be admitted, perfect, since it strains the theory to its extreme limits.

Keeping in mind these doctrines, we can to-day appreciate rightly the profound hypocrisy inherent in the innumerable declarations with which the Germans have pretended to deny their misdeeds, asserting that no act of *useless cruelty* had been committed by the German troops. For what cruelty can appear useless to those who maintain that terrorism is necessary, that it is not possible to make a distinction between the army and the civil population, that if needful even little villages must be bombarded, and that the destruction of all property, even private, from which no advantage could possibly be gained, is a necessary rule ? “ Useful

cruelty ” makes a pair with the “ necessity ” (*Not kennt kein Gebot*) of the Chancellor-philosopher ; it is the necessity—to conquer, a necessity altogether German, absolutely forbidden to the adversaries. \*



THE TACIT PRESUPPOSI-  
TIONS OF THE THEORY



## THE TACIT PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE THEORY

THE diagrammatic clearness of these theories, the charming simplicity of this line of reasoning, the severe rigidity with which they co-ordinate means to ends, must certainly excite admiration, if only from an æsthetic point of view, in this golden age for the worshippers of force and will. The doctrine of the superman has led to that of the supnation; but what has still more helped to make these theories so actively alive and flourishing in Germany is a profound moral—or rather immoral factor, which deserves to be brought to light. Looking closely, it is seen at once that the logical supports of "Absolute War" cannot be maintained without certain tacit premises,

which—clearly enunciated—arouse indignation and repugnance. The fact of not perceiving these premises, or of passing them over, is an indication of a sinister simplicity, it is the sign of a mentality which one cannot hesitate to call barbaric. Hence it is that the theories on war, created and put in practice by the Germans, acquire an extreme interest when considering the psychology of this people. When at war he who attacks, if he is prudent, ought to remember that he may be defeated. This elementary truth cannot have escaped the notice of the theorists of Absolute War. It must have occurred to them also, that if the theory were put in practice by both sides, no real advantage would accrue to either adversary. Conceiving such a thing as absolute war, they must start with the conviction that the enemy is incapable of applying the same methods. German theorists deride regulated war, they con-

sider it a *Kriegspiel*, they say that it is a contradiction in terms, an empty expression. Still they cannot deny that regulated war has been for a long time the practice, and is still practised by the adversaries of Germany, notwithstanding the right of reprisal which has recently been adopted. Germany knows this and takes advantage of it. For German theorists, warlike action postulates two conditions: violent action on their side, terror and defeat on the other. Through the precepts of extreme violence is discernible sometimes the fear of reprisal, but it may be said that this reprisal is considered by them as almost impossible.

They place confidence in the "moral weakness" of the adversary, setting down to the account of this weakness all sentiments of humanity, moderation and repugnance to acts of ferocity. The Germans are fond of saying that they are a young



people, and that other peoples, the Latin especially, are old and decadent. Unconscious confession of their own barbarism ! In their exaltation of absolute war they count also on the fact that in a contest without restraints and without rules, treachery need have no limit. Against treachery are in fact directed all the rules of war which the Germans wish to disavow, with all sentiments of courtesy, chivalry, and military honour.

The rejection of every war custom is not so much a sign of confidence in their own strength as *faith in their own attitude towards treachery* and a firm intention to take advantage of it. Regulated war represented progress compared with the shock of barbaric hordes, as the duel represented progress as compared with the ambush and affray. The German doctrines in war are, therefore, a true reversion to barbarism, whose gravity appears more manifest when we consider that

the theories do not in some miraculous way beget the practices, but are only formulæ which at most serve to strengthen and perpetuate them, rendering them more vivid and definite to the consciousness. Although the rules of chivalry and civilized warfare are incontestably useful, it must not be supposed that they have arisen from purely utilitarian calculations. Such rules are not arrived at except by the germination and growth of the necessary sentiments.

Now the sentiments which produce chivalry are not at all, as the Germans seem to think, a timid desire to save as much as possible one's own skin ; he who goes to war in a good cause does not hesitate to face death, even death in any form. The sentiment which gives origin to the rules is repugnance to treachery, arm of the weak and the cowardly. He who feels strong, courageous, and in the right, is naturally chivalrous and generous. The

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utility of the rules is revealed afterwards, and the nobility of the motive alone renders it acceptable. . . .

Just on this account, even if those who proclaim absolute war were to succeed in persuading us that it is useful, that would not prevent its being repugnant, as is everything which is vile ; and to approve of absolute war is a sign of moral baseness almost as great as the practice of it. Some reprisal may perhaps occur, when it appears a vital necessity, such as the necessity of defence (the only necessity which has no law), but then extreme action will acquire the noble character of a just castigation, inflicted on one who has placed himself outside the pale of humanity.

In any case, if the absolute war does not end in victory, it will profit nothing to those who wage it. To venture to put in practice such a method of warfare, it is absolutely necessary to be sure of winning. Whence springs this certainty ? Con-

tempt for the adversary, so spontaneous in a warlike people, is a good factor of victory, but may also lead to ruinous mistakes; it cannot suffice for theorists of a positivism *à outrance* like the Germans. The will to conquer, so magnified by the pragmatists, is too obvious, is common to all, and it is very evident that for one side it cannot be sufficient. The true basis of the Germanic confidence in victory, the necessary presupposition of absolute war, consists in *the enormous secret and insidious preparation*, and in *the intention to provoke war on any pretext whatever* when it is felt that the preparation is sufficient, and the *moment opportune*. These politico-military tactics, if not of an exclusively German brand, are those which Germany has adopted for more than a century. All the “genius” of Bismarck may be summed up as the application without scruple of these principles. And if Germany to-day fails in the

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great Coup, it will be through a combination of errors of calculation, rather than from any weakness of purpose or modification of method.

WHERE THE THEORY IS AT  
FAULT



## WHERE THE THEORY IS AT • FAULT

GERMAN statesmen, war theorists, generals, historians and philosophers are unanimous in denying more or less openly the rights of the people. J. von Hartmann says it frankly: *Der Krieg verlässt die Basis der völkerrechtlichen Erledigung*. According to Lasson, war is a species of judgment of God, and the issue of a war is always just. There is then no right belonging to the people in war. In peace it is almost the same. *Das geschichtliche Recht ruht auf der Kraft*, solemnly declares Wuttke. And Bismarck affirms that treaties are only of value so long as they can be maintained by force. Under these maxims, inspired in appearance by a courageous historical realism



which abhors illusory sentimentalisms, looks reality in the face, and accepts it whatever it may be, is found one fixed principle which divested of phrases of a philosophical colour, comes to this: Against superior force there is no law and there is therefore no right. Not one of the gentlemen above mentioned has finished his career in prison, or on the gallows, nor has ever—so far as I know—been proceeded against for ordinary crime. It is evident then that in private relations where there is law, they know how to avoid it. Civilized men do not content themselves with so little.

There are two words which for all decent-minded men are not empty ones: morality, honour. Exclusive altogether of the penal law, right-thinking men feel an imperious demand of their conscience, which is more effectual in making them refrain from certain acts, than fear of the law itself. And while knowing from

painful experience how great is the power of brute force in the course of history, they do not cease to judge the acts of nations in the same light as those of individuals, and are stirred by unjust violence to an indignation which is a force in itself, and which statist, historians, and philosophers of the "realistic School" do wrong to neglect. The reality of moral forces is much greater than enters into the calculations of the most learned German theorists. So real is it that it appears quite intuitive even in people who cannot boast a refined culture.

Among savages fidelity to the given word is sometimes so strong as to impel to heroic sacrifices. But is it then true that there is no law for offences against the rights of the people? If there is no superior law, if there is no tribunal which can sentence and punish by force violators of rights, ~~there~~ is still an *ulterior* law, constituted by the moral reaction

against collective infamies. As in civil life the immoral man suffers public contempt and its inevitable consequences, so a people, victorious through the use of barbarous methods, inspires a general aversion which at times becomes an overwhelming force.

There are peoples who in the course of their history have committed errors which they are painfully expiating; and Germany will have to make for a long time bitter reflections on the pre-eminence of "military utility" and on the "necessity which has no law." War theorists only preoccupy themselves with victory, to be reached by any means whatever; as to what may happen after the victory they do not concern themselves, not even to consider whether its value may not be affected by the means used to gain it. Is this also a problem to be left to the philosophers? Indeed, philosophy is not necessary; it requires only the most

elementary psychological intuition to know that wounds of the body are more easily forgotten than those of the amour-propre ; that the fiercest struggles, provided they are fairly fought, allow of a frank and ready reconciliation ; while victories obtained by treachery and unfair means, followed by a tyrannical peace, leaves behind lasting and inextinguishable hatreds, which place a barrier between the conqueror and the vanquished, and prepare for inevitable revenge. These are things which all know and understand, except the Germans.

Ancient Rome and modern England, each a mistress of imperialism, has realized the miracle of bringing together the most heterogeneous populations, rapidly, without effort, with reciprocal advantage, without *argusing rebellions*, achieving even a loyal attachment. But Rome did not, nor has England despised and ill-treated either enemies or van-

quished ; they understood and respected them. •

That is what the Germans do not succeed in doing. In the plan of " realistic policy," the victorious generals of " absolute war " give place to governors of the mailed fist type, who within a few days germanize the names of the streets and the signs of the shops, but make the name German invariably hated.

Alsace has not changed its sentiments in forty-five years of German domination, while by the French it was assimilated rapidly. Whatever happens, Belgium will never be German. Following the method dear to their philosophers, of going on to the logical result without ever looking back to see whether by chance their premises are mistaken, the Germans have to arrive of necessity at the practical conclusion, that conquered people must be exterminated and substituted.

It cannot be denied that they have set

themselves to this task with a good will. Bismarck, fit champion of his race, advised that opportunities of shooting the male population *en masse* should not be lost, leaving to the soldiers the gallant task of—germanizing the women. To-day in Belgium and Champagne, the Germans have not spared themselves in this sort of work, and if the remaining population, robbed even of bread, has not died of hunger, it is owing to the intervention of the United States. But it appears that the task of extermination is not easy; and the examples of history are not encouraging. The Vandals and the Huns did what they could in this direction but did not succeed; they even finished by being absorbed themselves; only their name remains immortal, consecrated in the ages as a designation for ferocious people and odious deeds of destruction. Nor have the modern Turks been more fortunate; the Balkan populations were

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for centuries the victims of the process of extermination, but to-day they re-arise stronger and more spirited than ever. Decidedly the "inferior races" do not resign themselves to being wiped out. However, there is no reason to despair. The modern Huns, free from moral scruples, and from other technical imperfections, are advancing with the help of science. At present they use poison gas and bacilli cultures. If they are not enough—patience; there will be another opportunity. When with a skilful espionage in the planet Mars, they have discovered the secret of those burning rays which the Martians used with such good effect in Wells *War of the Worlds*, then war will have reached perfection, and the teutonic race will occupy unopposed the entire world. The moral and æsthetic ideals of the Germans will prevail. All will carry out their functions at the command of one. German only will be

spoken. Style of dress and manner of thinking will be according to regulation, and on the whole earth from one pole to the other will be a colossal serving up of sausages and beer.





FROM THEORY • TO  
PRACTICE



## FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

THE war doctrines of the Germans have taken us away completely from individual psychopathology to lead us on to the ground of Ethnic psychology. The change will appear the more justified when we come to consider the practical application of the theories. First of all it is necessary to exclude a very natural doubt. Certain acts of collective ferocity cannot be put to the ordinary account of a people. They are the product of *exceptional emotional tumults* which have brutalized the crowd. In risings, rebellions, in great disasters, in retreats and victories sharply contested, when the instincts of defence and offence are let loose and exasperated to the extreme; when every individual responsibility disappears in a

collective and disordered action, deeds are committed which cannot be taken as an index of the normal psychology. Now this is not at all the case as regards the massacres committed by the Germans in the present war. The massacres and devastations have occurred since the beginning of the war with order, method, and without any necessity, save the famous military necessity.

When the pretext of defence appears evidently a lying one, the actors in the cruel drama excuse themselves with the obligations of discipline and obedience. Soldiers must obey ; officers have to order, obeying in their turn superior orders, the prescriptions of the *Kriegsgebrauch*, the theory so well assimilated. It appears an excuse, and is an aggravation. It is well known that "Obey" is a great word with the Germans. At bottom this people which aspires to dominate the world is more made to obey than to command.

The *deutsche Treue* which is so much extolled is made up of servile obedience ; fidelity of vassals, obedience to the master, which does not exclude betrayal, when there is the possibility of passing to the service of a stronger master. Discipline, order, the organization itself from which the Germans drew so much profit, are founded not so much on the consciousness of a collective end, as on the mystic and instinctive respect for authority, which paralyses all criticism, but quiets the individual, removing from him the weight of every responsibility.

It is so easy to obey ! With all this, although the habit of obedience is in the blood, although it is strengthened in the family, in the school, and in the life, there are acts of obedience which are not carried out unless the moral stamp of him who obeys is adapted to the order he receives. There are armies—not German—which would not obey certain re-

volting orders. There are soldiers—not German—who would let themselves be shot rather than kill wounded, eviscerate women and mutilate children. There are officers—not German—who would feel themselves dishonoured by transmitting certain orders. It is easy for the theorists seated at a desk to admit terrorism as a military necessity, but terrorism cannot be put in practice if the troops are not adapted for the inhuman business.

The German theorists thoroughly count on this attitude, and are not mistaken. They even allow themselves the luxury of softening with beautiful phrases the coarse aspect of the cruel theory. J. von Hartmann does not approve of written limitations as to how war should be carried on. The instinct of self-preservation comes out in battle ; there is no need to try to restrain it, for every soldier will find spontaneously a limit to his violence in the innate sentiments of equity and

honour. The General Staff on its part agrees that when there is no military necessity, a little room may be left for the chivalrous spirit and for any hereditary sentiment not formulated in written precepts. With so much liberty of action, practical proof gives a true sample of the moral value which is to be attributed to the combatant army, and to the nation from which the army is drawn. What does experience tell us? It gives us a terrible judgment on German morality. According to von Clausewitz, Napoleon was the first to apply on a vast scale and with method (after the modest attempts of Frederick II) the principles of absolute war. Opportunities were not wanting then to the French of showing what might be the consequences of giving free play to hereditary sentiments. But the fact is that the French troops never, either in victorious battle, in the most perilous situation or during the occupation of



rich cities, abandoned themselves to acts even distantly to be compared with those of the Germans. The proofs are numerous, even from the German side, of the humanity with which they treated the populations which had submitted, and of the moderation with which they made use of victory. And even in the present war during the Russian occupation of Galicia, the Austrians, who are so given to exaggeration and to fabulous inventions, have had to admit that the Russians—accused of barbarity—had acted with humanity. Never can the same be said of the Germans.

In the wars of 1814-15 the troops of Blucher burned innumerable villages, exterminating the inhabitants; after the battle of Waterloo, the Prussians massacred entire battalions of unarmed prisoners; in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, burning, pillaging and massacres; war fines on towns and Vandal-like destruction

occurred on a great scale; during the international occupation of Peking, the German troops distinguished themselves from all the others by their butchery and plundering. To-day they do not behave any better; rather they do things on a vaster scale, according to a more methodical plan, and with a greater refinement of cruelty. And as the culmination of cynicism, they are not ashamed to copy from the professional thieves a certain stercoraceous rite, which has left its filthy traces in all the villas and castles occupied even by the flower of the German Staff. All wars bring inevitable horrors; more than ever modern wars, through the great number of combatants, and the increased power of warlike implements. But there are no horrors of war which do not leave room for the blossoming of some sentiment of humanity, and splendid amidst so many episodes of blind fury, appears some generous act which serves

to rehabilitate humanity. The German army truly does not shine under this aspect ; and the painful effort of the German journals to offer to the public some proof of humanity, only serves to accentuate the absence of it.

There is a photograph from the theatre of war which has made the round of all the illustrated papers. A big German soldier (perhaps a reservist who has left some children at home) holds on his knee a little French child, and is offering it a spoonful of soup—his own soup ! How can one confronted by a spectacle so moving accuse the Germans of the massacre of so many unarmed ? The picture has written underneath *Wir Barbaren !* which expresses wonderfully well the ironic and pathetic bitterness of a people overflowing with humanity, and which feels itself misunderstood.

THE MORAL ADHESION OF  
THE INTELLECTUALS



## THE MORAL ADHESION OF THE INTELLECTUALS

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THE psychology of the combatants has its complement in that of the citizens who have remained at home to work for all, to keep going the life of the army by preparing arms and food, and to maintain the public spirit with misrepresentations and lies. We do not wish to make too much of the bombastic proclamations, of avowals of hate, and of gross abuse; but we cannot do less than notice with disgust the manifestation of hypocrisy and badly concealed brutality on the part of those who ought to give proof, even in the gravest stress, of rectitude and mental equilibrium. Unfortunately among the documents which have appeared since the war began, there is not one

which shows a greater moral poverty and want of conscience than the circulars of the German intellectuals to the civilized nations, and especially to Italian "friends." How can they flatter themselves that we are blind to the contradictions which show their inward complacency at facts they would like to deny, or their clumsily masked intimidations? What good is it to swear on their honour, declaiming melodramatically "It is not true," when all their denials sound like confessions? The neutrality of Belgium was not violated—but to anticipate the hypothetical intentions of France and England, of which the proofs (for that matter notoriously false) were discovered after the neutrality of Belgium had already been violated.

The massacres are denied, but it is asserted that the Belgians "have suffered the just punishment of their crimes." They dare to affirm that Germany did not

wish the war, but they exalt at the same time the merits of militarism and great warlike preparations. And it is to be noted that the signatories of different individual declarations have candidly affirmed that Germany has the right to manipulate the world as it wills. They dare even to deny that violation of the rights of the people which is preached persistently from the professional chair and in books, sanctioned by military regulations, and practised methodically on every occasion. What persuasive ability! What delicacy! What tact! But with whom do they think they are speaking, these professors? With the peasants of Pomerania perhaps? Another example; small but significant. In the numberless communications to neutrals, the systematic violation of women by the German soldiery has either been passed over in silence, or boldly denied. In Germany instead, these outrages become the theme



of obscene jokes in the humorous papers ; and even *Simplicissimus* which piques itself on its refinement, at the end of nine months from the invasion of Belgian and French territory, is pleased to depict a flight of symbolic storks, which invade the soil of France bearing innumerable newly-born babies ! And the legend says : “ First the Zeppelins, then the Storks.” Can ruffianism go farther than this ? And how many invocations everywhere to the *furor teutonicus*, which appears to have become the greatest moral boast of Germany ! Does no German feel the hatefulness and absurdity of this boast ? Does no one remember that violence among civilized people suggests iron bars or the lunatic asylum ?

Does no one recognize the cool courage of civilized men, which does not break out in the bellowings of wild beasts, but prepares an inflexible resistance and just victory ? . . . }

WILLIAM AND GERMANIC  
MEGALOMANIA



## WILLIAM AND GERMANIC • MEGALOMANIA

LET us return once more to the point of departure and see to what extent William II deserves the reputation for mysticism and megalomania which his speeches and poses have earned for him. The reputation is deserved. Although to speak of God is allowable to Emperors and boasting of His help a family tradition of the Hohenzollerns, no one hitherto had so abused its use as to be made the theme of numberless witticisms. Unusual also are the doctrinal affirmations on "divine right," which at the present day are not paid much attention to. William loves to proclaim himself the anointed of the Lord and to recall the rather doubtful glories of his ancestors; this ought to

make evident even to the blind the clear line of divine thought which is exemplified in the arm and sword of the Hohenzollerns. He has a divine mission, which he is to fulfil at the head of the German people, elect of God. So many ambitions of dominion adapted themselves ill with the regime of peace which was necessary to the preparation for war, and they had to find an outlet in theatrical posturings. All know how much William loves the pageantry which dazzles the crowd ; how he centuples himself in heroic poses before the lens of the photographer, and how he seeks to realize, if only in dress, the thousand incarnations of his power. This love for scenic magnificence, for mysticism almost Messianic, is certainly one of the most noted characteristics of the Emperor William. It may, however, be admitted that it is not discordant with German surroundings. The megalomania, rather formal and verbal than other-

wise, of the Emperor, finds its counterpart in a megalomania less obtrusive but more active, which cultivated without pause for a century, swells to-day with *mad pride* all the German people. The heroic poses of the Kaiser please the Germans, who in general do not find them at all ridiculous or even exaggerated. No people loves so much the outward insignia of power; liveries, uniforms, orders, the most insignificant titles and decorations. He who has a ribbon feels himself nearer the Emperor and to God. If William were to appear in the streets of Berlin in the costume of Parsifal or Frederick Barbarossa, it would not excite jests or laughter, but reverent and awed admiration. Above all, when he speaks of the Germanic "Mission," the Kaiser expresses the thought which is the pride of all his people. Even if they do not think of a dominion by divine right as he does, the Germans think of a necessary and

inevitable conquest of the entire world by force or cunning, with the docile co-operation, or violent subjugation of the other nations.

In their minds has grown like a tumour a sense of measureless superiority which goes well with their inability to understand the point of view of others.

For the Germans there is only one legitimate way of thinking, feeling, acting and living—their own. All that departs from it is a sign of inferiority, an error to be corrected. They have pedagogy in the blood. The women cooks, proud of their cookery receipts, have the same mentality as the professors, who conceive knowledge to be a system of infallible rules. How clearly this is portrayed in the following incident! Marshal Hindenburg, who was said to have disease of the liver, received thousands of letters from good patriots who wished at all costs to teach him the sure way to get well!

To-day all the Beckmesser are furious. The military want to set the world right with fire and sword; the commercial and manufacturing classes think now is the time to suppress by force all competition; the professors, milder only in appearance, feel the necessity of inculcating in all, *nolens volens*, German discipline, science, method and organization. They want to "organize" the world, that is, to Germanize it.

The philosopher Lasson says it, the chemist Ostwald says it, the zoologist Hæckel and the professor von Leyden repeat it, even Magnus Hirschfeld, high priest of the sexual perverts, affirms it. There are some who wonder that the entire world does not submit spontaneously and with gratitude. There are those who look on reluctant peoples as a lot of schoolboys rebelling against the accustomed rod; and some fly into a passion, lose every ray of reason and make



suggestions that are enough to excite pity. Only an enraged paranoic could write such a letter as that of Leyden which appeared last February in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. In it is said without ambiguity that the Germans are the elect of the earth, destined to govern the world for the good of humanity; Germany will remain alone, swearing revenge against all, destruction in "another war" of the English and the Russians, banishment from social intercourse for the French, and contempt merely for the neutral nations! How would it be if every one in Germany were to think in this way? But if all do not go so far, there is not any one who is not at least tinged with this exaltation, which by force of suggestion and repetition becomes a delirium

**DIAGNOSIS.**



## DIAGNOSIS

THE psychiatric thesis, which seeks the cause of the war in the personal influence of two abnormal individuals, fails then absolutely. Even if the mental condition of the two Emperors cannot be considered as quite normal, it must be allowed that their peculiarities have only a negligible value in comparison with the wide psychological and social motive causes which have prepared the present war. Francis Joseph's chin and William's arm are of less account even than Cleopatra's nose. Even allowing that Francis Joseph is deficient in intellect, and morally insensible, his personal influence remains a mere nothing amidst the titanic forces which in centuries of history have led to the formation of the Austro-Hungarian

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Empire, and which are now preparing its ruin.

William II does not appear so inert, but his effervescent activities are only a reflex of the ideas dominant in Germany. It may be that he is epileptic ; it is certain that he is fickle, restless, superficial, vain and very ambitious ; but he is not a man to impress his personal stamp on history. Mediocre in intelligence, he has never shown any genius for leadership ; infirm of purpose though exuberant in activity, he has always finished by sailing with the current, or at most has allowed himself some impulsive act, some inopportune exploit, for which he has had immediately to make amends.

The suggestion of Cabanès that the psychosis of William—if it can truly be called a psychosis—has spread from him to the last of his subjects, giving rise to a collective delirium, unique for its vastness, is decidedly erroneous.

Neipp is nearer the truth when he says that William's environment was fatal to his intellectual and moral development. Undoubtedly : he was infatuated with the dominant ideas, and from his position and mental constitution he was influenced by them perhaps more than many others. Unfortunately, however, the same suggestive influences, growing like an avalanche during these last years, have made themselves felt more or less by all Germans.

Clinical psychiatry then lays down its arms. To the solution of the immense problem which this war has placed before us, it can only contribute with a negative conclusion, putting us on our guard against the popular error which heaps so many maledictions on the two Emperors, a dangerous error because it tends to hide the real delinquent, and that is not a man but a nation : Germany. Put out at the door, psychiatry tries to come back by the window, with the pretext of a

collective psychosis. The mental state of the Germans has been, in fact, compared to that of certain fanatical sects, which spring up rapidly from time to time, as if making us spectators of the birth of new religions.

The case is very different. When one of these sects arises, the delirium originates in the mind of one only, a paranoic endowed with high suggestive power and of uncommon personal fascination; he transmits it to an ignorant crowd, to the population of an entire country, as in the religious endemics of Russia; or he draws around him, from a population relatively cultured, a band of those who are more receptive subjects of mystic teachings, as are the followers of "Antonism" in Belgium, and those of "Pfingstbewegung," or of "Christian Science" who swarm in America and Germany. The national infatuation of the Germans is of another kind; less

grave from a psychiatric point of view, much more grave as regards social and political consequences. It is the collective product of a slow development which has been going on for centuries, favoured by political events, but founded on the normal psychology of a whole people, reinforced by education, by mutual suggestion, by an extensive propaganda, and by bonds of interest consecrated by custom and law. Although the effects of this psychological evolution reproduce those of individual pathology, and one may speak in psychological terms of criminality and delirium, one cannot strictly speak of it as true madness, nor refer judgment on it to the alienists, as coming within their province. Nevertheless, the case of Germany is singularly grave. It is not a question merely of their ingenuous assumption of superiority and excellence, that megalomania, more verbal than otherwise, which it may be said is



common to all people, clear-sighted always to the defects of others, too often blind to their own. The exaltation of the Germans surpasses all record for its enormities and exhibitions of criminal violence, which appear discordant, out of time, and out of place in the midst of European populations. It makes one think—though the comparison is weak—of the Huns and Vandals, of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan. The Germans cannot bear to hear it said; they are astonished and enraged at being spoken of as barbarians. There is in this wonder an element of ingenuousness, of unconsciousness which strengthens the case against them. They do not understand that a people may possess a hundred universities, a thousand laboratories, innumerable perfect workshops and a flourishing commerce, and notwithstanding all that, may be barbarians. They cannot succeed in comprehending a truth which for others is elementary, that is,

that civilization does not consist in knowing, but in the manner of acting ; it is not a matter of science, of technique or of mechanism—which serve bad ends as well as good—but of sentiments which reveal themselves in conduct.

Knowledge is acquired in a short time by individuals as by peoples ; true civilization requires instead a training of centuries. The barbaric sentiment is not to be successfully masked under the varnish of technical progress and economic prosperity, any more than coarseness of mind is hidden by clumsy compliments and ostentatious affability.

Latin civilization, the humanism of the renaissance, modern science, have not sensibly modified the German spirit. The virtues which it boasts are made up of material strength and prodigious egotism. Its history has no examples of generosity, of courtesy, or of sacrifice to a disinterested ideal. Its heroes are

tribal chiefs, brutal soldiery and pedants. Germany furnished mercenary troops to all the world, but has never given a single volunteer to the struggles for independence of other peoples. It achieved national unity rather by the compulsion and deceptions of the ruling classes than by virtue of the people's will.

It knows war well, but is ignorant of regenerating revolutions. It derided and hated Garibaldi, and did not understand Mazzini. Its social-democratic movement was and is guided by Jews of pure race, skilful in trafficking with the merchandise, labour, but incapable of conceiving an ideal higher than that of a human anthill. On this rough soil flourished amazingly the tendency to megalomania and to criminality, each yielding support to the other.

The tendency to megalomania arose from the victories which closed the Napoleonic period, from the subsequent

political unity, the increase of population and of the military forces, economic prosperity and the victories of 1866 and 1870 : it grew beyond measure with the excessive industrial development and its accompanying need of commercial expansion and its furious competition ; it touches its "apogee" and acquires new diffusive vigour among the cultivated classes, proud of their progress, of the scientific and technical development of their country, and of its firm economic and political leadership. It flourishes among the scientists, boastful even if great, among the philosopher apologists of force, and the professors of (future) history, who prophesy day by day the triumphal march of pangermanism. The criminal tendency is inherent in German militarism, trained to aggression, educated to ignore all rights of others. In the German officer, alongside his haughtiness and his contempt for the foreigner,

exists the unbounded caste arrogance, which holds as of no account the mere soldier, humble and blind instrument, mass of muscles without volition, flesh for stick and cannon. No army gives in time of peace so many examples of the brutal exercise of authority as the German. It is actual crime disguised as the spirit of discipline. The German censure, uncompromisingly severe where the *sancta sanctorum* is concerned, has not been able to suppress reports of the scandals of garrison life. It is worse than ever in time of war. There is something criminal in the unscrupulous tactics which drive to the slaughter compact masses of men substituting the fallen, only because this method gives greater probability of a rapid success; but here there is at least the excuse of the doctrinaire preconception that where the interests of the State are concerned, the individual has no rights. The criminality shows itself

more distinctly in the brutal command, the acts of violence necessary to urge the soldiers forward (infinitely less efficacious than cordial encouragement and example), in disciplinary cruelties of such a character and frequency, that even in these critical times, they were denounced to the Reichstag without the possibility of denial.

The criminal note does not emanate only from the military element, but also from the merchants and manufacturers, who had no little part in urging the Government to prepare and provoke the war, which was to give them, on cheap terms, the mastership of the sea and its distant continents. It is owing to them if Germany has behaved like a gamester, who sits down to the table without money, ready to pocket it if he wins, prepared to stab his adversary and rob him if he loses. Megalomania and violence go hand in hand in perfect accord. To the elect people, as to the superman, everything is

lawful. There is no moral obligation towards the infinitely inferior. Might is right. The strong takes what he chooses; those who oppose him must go down before him. It is an act of generosity to spare life to the vanquished, in order that he may afterwards work, submissive as a slave.

All Germans think so more or less, and it is not to be wondered at. Soldiers, philosophers, merchants, scientists, statesmen, manufacturers have been preaching for a century this barbaric crusade, and working to realize this mad and criminal dream. Not even the plainest and most harmless little tradesman has been able to withstand the fascination of the suggestion; and his pride must have made him strut with elation when Gobineau, Chamberlain and Woltmann assured him that he belonged to the elect race, which has done everything that there is good in the world, and is destined to

dominate it without opposition. And his instinctive rapacity must have been raised to madness when he was assured that the first great stroke to be accomplished by the war, was the extortion of twelve hundred millions sterling from France; "the old money bags."





## PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES



## PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES

COLLECTIVE aberrations, above all those which seize on an entire nation, cannot be at all considered—from the genetic side—the same thing as the individual madness which is treated in lunatic asylums. However, it is not as a simple metaphor that the expression, collective or national madness, is used.

Whatever may be the genetic mechanism of aberration, the final psychological result is a true delirium, with the usual influences on conduct, aggravated indeed by reciprocal suggestion. In practice then the same criterion must serve for fanatical peoples as is adopted for madmen; that of the danger to others. A correct diagnosis, if it does not serve to suggest a cure, will still help to preserve

sane people from danger. We do not find ourselves confronted by mad sovereigns who have dragged their people after them ; we are in front of a *dangerous nation* : Germany. It is certainly fortunate that all Europe knows it. However great may be the butchery and ruin of this war, it will not have been waged in vain for the interests of Europe and of the whole world.

The war has revealed to us the true Germany ; it has made us understand the immensity of the danger incurred through receiving trustingly an unscrupulous enemy, determined to cut the throat of the intended victim directly he should have finished weaving the net that was to render him impotent. As happens to cool and astute criminals who confide too much in their own foresight and sometimes devise schemes which come to grief ; so it has happened to Germany.

A little unforeseen event spoiled everything. Now the machine is in pieces,

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the plot is laid bare, and the punishment will not be wanting. The first task of civilized Europe is to subdue Germany by force, without paying any attention to hypocritical invocations to peace. But it is necessary also to think of the future. This crisis overcome, it is absolutely necessary to be armed against any recurrence. When the mania of greatness meets with external resistance, the mania of persecution immediately breaks out; and that is what has already happened. Germany has begun to complain of being envied, thwarted unfairly by all, plotted against and persecuted. It curses the wrong-headed resistance of ungrateful peoples who do not wish to know happiness under German discipline. Belgium persists in not letting herself be finished off. France will yield neither money, territory, colonies, nor liberty. The English cousins, traitors, will not allow to be taken from them quietly all the means of

life, and everything that makes life worth living. Italy fancies that she has a personality of her own. Russia, the barbarian, will not let one even strangle little Serbia. It is a downright conspiracy of wilful wickedness.

The more simple-minded Germans, stuffed full of official fictions, ask themselves with surprise why Germany is so antipathetic, to every one.

The reason is immediately found by the megalomaniac intellectuals; it is envy of their genius, strength and prosperity. The military who felt that victory was already theirs, speak of *revolt of subject peoples*. As the final catastrophe approaches, the delirium of persecution will become always more accentuated. Afterwards it will remain as a new source of danger; unless a violent internal crisis should, give at last—as is to be hoped—a clear vision of the reality to the blind and demented. To-day there are

those in Germany who cry aloud that it is necessary to break off all relations with the world ; Germany is sufficient to itself ; it wills to be alone. Would to God that they might really adopt this course ! Isolated thus, they would have time to think over the bitter consequences of their madness. But unfortunately these are hasty sayings which do not correspond with that intention. Many signs show that there are some in Germany who feel that there are already too many bonds broken with the world and that they must seek to save those which still remain.

And in this is the danger for the future. It is necessary to keep it well in mind and to repeat it to oneself always ; these relations which it is wished to save are the means by which new snares may be laid in the future ; they may permit the preparation of a surer blow sooner or later ! To forestall new intrigues, these bonds must be cut, until Germany-



profoundly changed in its political structure gives serious guarantees of honest and reasonable intentions. Germany must persuade herself that the world can do without her. We Italians, perhaps more than others, must extirpate from our soil the malign German roots which would suck from it all vital principle. And we must not forget the internal enemies, the neutralists of yesterday, to-day hidden or masked, who to-morrow with the pretext of peace, under the mantle of commerce or of internationalism, would let the danger grow again.

Can Germany be cured? The prognosis is very reserved, but not hopeless. Great disillusiones are salutary even to paranoics; and collective deliria are more easily dispelled than individual. Even grave moral defects, indelible in individuals, may be corrected in a whole people which has at its disposal ages in which to form its character. Let us hope, but not delude

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ourselves that the reform can be rapid. All the civilized nations would willingly see Germany intent on disinterested study and peaceful labour, collaborating in the common progress; but meanwhile they wish to be absolutely freed, by good will or by force, from every pretence of hegemony.



